

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 3521

E.O11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, AF, UR

SUBJ: USSR TO ASSIT IN NEW AFGHAN DEVELOPMENT PLAN

1. SUMMARY: ON MAY 28, A PROTOCOL WAS SIGNED IN KABUL PROVIDING FOR SOVIET TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN DRAFTING THE REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN'S FIRST DEVELOPMENT PLAN. THE PLAN WILL BE A SEVEN-YEAR PLAN, SCHEDULED TO COMMENCE WITH AFGHAN YEAR 1355 (MARCH 22, 1976). THIS PROTOCOL IS EVIDENCE OF GOA UNHAPPINESS WITH INDIAN PLANNING ADVISORS. HOWEVER, IT MAY PROVIDE GREATER WEIGHT TO THOSE FAVORING CENTRAL PLANNING AND SOVIET-TYPE GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISES IN THE CONTINUING ECONOMIC POLICY STRUGGLE WITHIN THE GOA. END SUMMARY.

2. THE CHAIRMAN OF THE STATE PLANNING COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE USSR, SERGI STROVSKI AND AFGHAN PLANNING MINISTER ALI AHMAD KHURRAM ON MAY 28 SIGNED A PROTOCOL PROVIDING FOR SOVIET PLANNING EXPERTS TO ASSIST IN THE COMPILATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN'S FIRST ECONOMIC PLAN. THE PROTOCOL REPORTEDLY CALLS FOR A TEAM OF SEVEN RUSSIAN PLANNERS, SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE IN MID-JUNE, TO WORK IN THE PLANNING MINISTRY ON THE BASIC DRAFT, AND A FURTHER TEAM OF UP TO TWELVE EXPERTS, ARRIVAL DATES UNKNOWN, WHO WILL
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WORK WITH THE PLANNING DEPARTMENTS OF THE VARIOUS ECONOMIC

MINISTRIES IN KABUL. THE NEW PLAN WILL HAVE A SEVEN-YEAR TERM, BECAUSE THE REPEATED FAILURE TO FULLY IMPLEMENT THE PREVIOUS THREE FIVE-YEAR PLANS HAS PROVEN EMBARRASSING AND BECAUSE A NUMBER OF PROPOSED INDUSTRIAL AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (SUCH AS THE KABUL-MASHED RAILROAD) ARE EXPECTED TO TAKE LONGER THAN FIVE YEARS TO COMPLETE. THE SOVIET EXPERTS WILL WORK WITH EXISTING INDIAN AND GERMAN PLANNING ADVISORS, BUT WILL CLEARLY HAVE THE PRE-DOMINANT POSITION. THE PLAN IS SCHEDULED TO BE COMPLETED AND APPROVED IN LESS THAN A YEAR AND WILL GO INTO EFFECT AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NEXT AFGHAN YEAR, 1355 (MARCH 22, 1976), BUT THE EXPERTS ARE EXPECTED TO REMAIN IN REDUCED NUMBERS, AT LEAST IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING, TO OVERSEE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN AND ASSIST IN DRAFTING A SECOND SEVEN YEAR PLAN.

3. OFFICIALS OF THE PLANNING MINISTRY HAVE INDICATED THAT NOT TOO MUCH IMPORTANCE SHOULD BE PLACED ON THE SELECTION OF THE USSR FOR PLANNING ASSISTANCE. THIS IS A RESULT OF NECESSITY AND AVAILABILITY. THE GOA'S PRIORITIES HAD CHANGED SINCE THE DRAFTING, UNDER THE OLD REGIME (ALSO WITH SOVIET HELP), OF THE FOURTH FIVE-YEAR PLAN, AND A NEW PLAN IS ESSENTIAL. THEY HAD HOPED TO DRAFT ONE WITH EXISTING INDIAN AND GERMAN ASSISTANCE, BUT A CONTINUING SERIES OF DISAGREEMENTS WITH THE GERMAN TEAM (PARTLY DUE TO PERSONALITY CONFLICTS) AND THE POOR QUALITY OF THE INDIAN EXPERTS PROVIDED, HAD CAUSED THE GOA TO LOOK FOR NEW ASSISTANCE. (THE INDIAN PLANNING EXPERTS HAVE HAD THEIR SCOPE OF WORK STEADILY REDUCED SINCE THEY ARRIVED AND HAVE NOW EFFECTIVELY BEEN MOVED OUT OF THE PLANNING MINISTRY. THEY ARE WORKING ON MANPOWER PLANNING AND ON STATISTICAL BACKGROUND FOR PLANNING IN THE CENTRAL STATISTICAL OFFICE, AND PERHAPS ON A FEW OTHER TECHNICAL JOBS.) THE GOA REPORTEDLY ASKED IRAN FOR ASSISTANCE AND WAS REFUSED. THE U.S. THEY POINTED OUT, HAD TOLD THE GOA THAT IS WAS NOT ANY LONGER WORKING IN SUCH ASSISTANCE AREAS, AND THE ONLY OTHER CHOICE WAS THE USSR. THEY EMPHASIZE THAT THE RUSSIAN EXPERTS WILL BE ADVISORS ONLY, AND THAT THE GOA WOULD BE DETERMINING ECONOMIC

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POLICY.

4. COMMENT: WE ARE INCLINED TO ACCEPT THE GOA EXPLANATION OF WHY SOVIET EXPERT ASSISTANCE WAS REQUESTED, BUT FEAR THAT THESE ADVISORS WILL BE USED BY THAT FACTION IN THE GOA WHICH FAVORS USSR-STYLE ECONOMIC POLICY AS A STRONG WEAPON IN THE CONTINUING ECONOMIC POLICY FIGHT. WE EXPECT THAT A SEVEN-YEAR PLAN WILL BE NO MORE

SECESSFUL IN OBTAINING OF OBJECTIVES THAN THE FIVE-YEAR PLANS WERE, SINCE THE PERIOD IS TOO LONG FOR GOA DEFINITION OF ITS POLICY OBJECTIVES, BUT THE EXISTENCE OF A PLAN IS LIKELY TO BE HELPFUL. IF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING INSISTS ON ITS LEADERSHIP ROLE, ACCEPTING ONLY "ADVICE" FROM THESE EXPERTS, THEY MAY HAVE AS UNSATISFACTORY AN EFFORT AS THAT OF THE GERMAN TEAM. IN ANY EVENT, THIS DEVELOPMENT MAKES IT UNLIKELY THAT THE GOA WILL DEVOTE MUCH INCREASED ATTENTION TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN THE NEAR FUTURE, WHICH MEANS A CONTINUED STAGNATION IN PRIVATE INVESTMENT AND PRIVATE ENTERPRISE.

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